

# Comparison between machiaVELLI and lao tzu politics essay



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Leadership qualities play a vital role in the success or failure of a society. Leaders with virtues help a nation to succeed in periods of peril. Effective leadership allows the country to be successful and the leaders to fulfill the country's mission. Leadership qualities offer an effective environment for subjects to become productive people towards their leaders and country. The absence of effective leadership qualities results to severe effects towards the country. The manner in which problems can be implemented is an issue that can be determined by the influence of the leaders qualities, which in return change the course the events take and how they can overcome any kind of resistance. On the other hand, leadership qualities in a leader are vital in determining how effectively and successfully decisions can be implemented. Every person recognizes the significance of leadership qualities when they vote their political leaders. This topic is extremely significant in making people realize that it matters in voting, choosing, and contesting for a person to be their leader. This essay compares the views of two authors in regard to leadership: Machiavelli and Lao-Tzu. Machiavelli was an historian in Italy, a diplomat, a philosopher, politician, a writer and humanist during the era of Renaissance. On the other hand, Lao-Tzu was an ancient Chinese philosopher during the 6th century. After a careful reading of Machiavelli and <https://assignbuster.com/comparison-between-machiavelli-and-lao-tzu-politics-essay/>

Lao-Tzu, it is clear that Machiavelli has the best and most relevant advice for a modern day society.

## **Advice on War**

Machiavelli believes that a leader must have no any other thought or aim for learning than war, its rules, as well as discipline since it is the solitary art that rulers should uphold. On the other hand, it has such force that not only sustains leaders, but also often makes it possible for ordinary men to ascend to such a rank. The neglect of the art result to the loss of a state. Therefore, to be able to acquire a state, the ruler must first be a master of the art of war. Machiavelli further argues that there lacks proportion among the unarmed and the armed, and therefore, it is unreasonable for the armed to yield willingly obedience to the unarmed since it is impossible for both to work jointly. As a result, a leader who fails to be a master of war and understand what the war art entails will be not respected, nor rely on by his soldiers. Therefore, a leader can achieve this by action or by study.

Machiavelli regards war as strategy and activity thus, the necessities needed are unity, induced order and fealty incited and projected by the fear of leadership or the leader (37-39).

When compared to Machiavelli, Lao Tzu holds different views on war. He believes that war should be the last resort and not the immediate option since it results to numerous loss and sufferings, both in defeat and victory. He believed weapons to be violence tools and therefore, every man must detest them except when necessity arises, and if forced, exercise them with topmost restraint. Human beings must never find pleasure in war; instead, they must choose to avoid war (25-27).

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## **Advice on Human nature**

Machiavelli believes that the rules that govern the conduct of a leader towards friends, as well as subjects are of utmost importance. The majority of leaders tend to picture principalities, as well as republics that they have never seen or known. The manner in which people live is distant from the way that they must live. That is to say, people who aspire to entirely act according to their virtue professions soon meet what destroys them.

Therefore, it is vital for leaders who wish to hold their own to be aware how to commit wrongs, as well as to apply them in accordance to necessity. The qualities that leaders exhibit brings them praise or blame: one can be reputed miserly another liberal; generous or rapacious; cruel or compassionate; faithless or faithful; cowardly and effeminate or brave and bold; affable or haughty; lascivious or chaste; sincere or cunning; hard or easy; grave or frivolous; religious or unbelieving (40-42)

Machiavelli further deems that leaders who exercise qualities that fail to bring them reputation end up hurting themselves. For instance, when leaders exercise virtues in a manner that can be recognized, then they can see to it that the revenues of the nation are enough, that they can defend themselves from any attack, and can engage in various enterprises exclusive of burdening their own people. The best example is Pope Julius II who got assisted to reach papacy through liberality reputation. The other example is the king of Spain who managed to conquer several enterprises since he was reputed to be liberal. This simply implies that if leaders prevent themselves from robbing their subjects, defend themselves, prevent themselves from becoming abject and poor, and not be compelled to be rapacious and hold a

little repute of being strict, they will acquire the vices that will enable them to govern. Consequently, as long as leaders keep their subjects loyal and united, then they do not have to mind a reproach since by using few examples, they can be reputed that through vices, they allow the rise of disorders from which pursues robberies and murders. On the other hand, all men are ungrateful, they are covetous, cowardly, false, and fickle, and provided that leaders succeed, they are theirs entirely. They will offer the leaders their property, blood, children and life in instances when the need becomes distant. Leaders who depend on the promises of their subjects are ruined since friendship gained from payments and not through the nobility and greatness of mind can be earned, but they are unsecured, and therefore during the time of need, they fail to be relied upon (44-46).

When compared to Machiavelli, Lao-Tzu's views are quite different, he believes that there exist an ideal way that a ruler can use to govern a country. The government of any given country ought to have minimum involvement in its people's lives. This is because virtues tend to come naturally to people in instances when they desert their endeavors to seek formally these values and their desires. On the other hand, rulers ought to be humble and tolerant by taking care of the needs of their people and focusing in matters that are affecting the country rather than snooping on other countries. A ruler who is ideal should try to avoid any kind of war with other countries. The minimal government concept by Lao-Tzu can be considered to be reasonable to some extent. For instance, Lao-Tzu states: "If you don't trust the people, you make them untrustworthy". This statement exemplifies the theory of labeling. When people get labeled by the society as

being defiant in respect to their major wrongdoing, they tend to become more probable to be conventional to such a role and do secondary acts of deviance. This happens since options to engage in a life that is more virtuous are taken away from them. For instance, people who have one criminal violation record in the society are needed to include it in their resume which in return makes it hard for them to get a job. As a result, the person labeled adopts behaviors coinciding with the label, therefore making that label true even if it was incorrectly applied initially (28-31).

Lao-Tzu further argues that when a leader continuously suspects a revolt is brewing in a government, he might get rid of the subjects precisely to petition peacefully the government. Such actions label indirectly the subjects as unruly and disloyal. When there is lack of legitimate means options to express the subjects' concern, they are likely to rebel or riot subsequently in spite of them being content before. For that reason, when a leader fails to trust his subjects and ladles them implicitly as untrustworthy, the leader actually leads them to become untrustworthy. Lao-Tzu believes that when people stop striving to achieve their impractical desires, then they can naturally attain positive life aspects like wisdom and happiness. Lao-Tzu states: " a nation nourishes its own people and doesn't meddle in the affairs of others" (33-34).

A relevant example is the United States of America. It intervenes excessively in the matters that involve other countries instead of being more concerned of its own problems. For instance, in the Hurricane Katrina, the country lacked enough personnel, as well as essential equipment for emergency and vehicles that operate in high waters since they were in Iraq together with 3,  
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000 National Guard members. The United States would have never been involved in the issues that affect foreign nations but instead make certain that its own people's well being is safe.

## **Conclusion**

From the essay above, it is apparent that Machiavelli offers the best advice as compared to Lao-Tzu. Machiavelli observes that leaders must learn the art of war as strategy and activity. The neglect of the art of war results to the loss of a state. On the other hand, the rules that govern the conduct of a leader towards friends, as well as subjects are of utmost importance. Also, the qualities that leaders exhibit bring them praise or blame. Leaders who exercise qualities that fail to bring them reputation end up hurting themselves. Lao Tzu on the other hand argues that war should be the last resort. He also observes that there exists an ideal way that a ruler can use to govern a country by having minimum involvement in its people's lives. Rulers ought to be humble and tolerant by taking care of the needs of their people and focusing in matters that are affecting the country. When people stop striving to achieve their impractical desires, then they can naturally attain positive life aspects like wisdom and happiness. The arguments of the two authors tend to be right in some aspects, but they also differ in other issues.